sorry about the blood in your mouth (i wish it was mine)

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/28880130.

Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Category:
M/M

Fandom:
Dead Poets Society (1989)

Relationships:
Charlie Dalton/Neil Perry, Unrequited Charlie Dalton/Neil Perry, Minor or Background Relationship(s), Todd Anderson/Neil Perry

Characters:
Charlie Dalton, Neil Perry (Dead Poets Society), Mentioned Todd Anderson - Character, Mentioned John Keating

Additional Tags:
POV Second Person, Unrequited Love, Character Death, Dead Neil Perry (Dead Poets Society), Pining, warning for neil's death

Language:
English

Stats:
Published: 2021-01-20 Words: 1,395 Chapters: 1/1

sorry about the blood in your mouth (i wish it was mine)

by velvetknuckle

Summary

Summer ‘58 is when the love of Charlie’s life tells him he wishes he was dead.

Or: Charlie Dalton has loved Neil Perry from the moment they met.

Notes

the title is from little beast by richard siken.

also, there’s like bodily(?) metaphors in this,,,idk how to word it but a lot of the imagery is based around the heart and flesh and blood. I don’t think it’s gory? But i thought i’d mention it just in case.

See the end of the work for more notes

Iron ribcages crumble at the sight of him, that boy—*the* boy. The boy that tears through your defences when you first meet him on that fateful Monday. The boy that somehow locates your beating heart from in between layers of skin and bone and muscles, from in between the maze of tendons and ligaments that he lacerates with a warm smile and an outstretched hand.

You are Charles Dalton and you're fifteen when Neil Perry tells you his name in the doorway to the dorm you'll share for your first year at Welton Academy. You are Charles Dalton and you're breathless because fuck—can a boy be allowed to prod at the chambers of your heart? So easily? So soon? *Ever*?

Does it even matter? Because by the time you've unpacked all your things, his energetic tone, his velvety timbre, his amiable stares, and his quick wit, all of it has allowed him to pry. And you let him. You hopeless, curious boy—you let him. And now he has his fingers lodged in between your valves and veins and arteries, dripping with your newly-birthed crimson want.

You wonder if he can see your blood on his palms; does he know he's red-handed in making you yearn for him?

You wonder if you should stop it.

(You don't).

You wonder if he will ever look at you the way you look at him, like he put all the stars in the sky.

(He doesn't).

***

Summer '58 is when he tells you.

The mid-afternoon sun beats down on your sweating figure, head heated from being out for so long. Mid-June has brought about subtropical weather, shockingly humid air making it hard for you to concentrate on anything other than peeling away your shirt from your drenched skin. And you wish for an ice bath or an ice cream, but all you have are lingering thoughts of your roommate—for two years in a row now, lucky—and how gorgeous he would look with rays of sunlight streaming down his face.

The reverie carves itself into the inside of your chest, amongst all things Neil-related. Its sharp edges drag along your flesh like one hundred daggers and it fucking hurts but you let it. You let it because you're in love and it hurts. You let it because Neil Perry is worth it.

What's a few chestly twinges if it is his name that is being etched into your being?

(Cameron bitches that you're not paying attention to the trig questions due tomorrow, but Cameron's a little rat and his opinion doesn't matter. You slam your textbook shut and leave; you want to see Neil).

At one point you recognise the inevitable anguish that awaits you; you know very well that one day Neil's clutch on your precious heart will grow too strong and the brittle thing will shatter like china. But like all things that don't please you, you tuck it away.

You're Charlie Dalton, Neil Perry's best friend—you don't mind woe if Neil keeps smiling.

More is for the greedy, and when it comes to your roommate, you haven't learned to be selfish yet.

(Really, you wish that *he* would be selfish, and tear your whole heart out for himself, at least to acknowledge that he wants it).

But when you reach your room, it's not the Neil who basks in halcyon daylight that greets you, not the Neil that creates a new rhythm for your beating heart, not the Neil that you dream of, not the Apollo that lumineces like he is your very own star. No, it is not your chipper best friend that can carry the world on his shoulders, that greets you.

A grey Neil sits on the bed across from yours, and his skin is pallid like the ash from the secret cigarettes you often share with him. He looks cadaverous and your stomach stirs with something acidic, leaving a bitter taste in the back of your mouth.

You ask him what's wrong and he cries. Cries like the heavens will come crashing down and every stifled wail bites through your skin with its melancholy incisors, tearing your flesh and every defence until you sit with your hand on his back, tracing soothing patterns while your heart bleeds from the love you will never get.

Summer '58 is when the love of your life tells you he wishes he were dead.

***

Death is such a big word.

It sits on Neil's lips as an ugly wound, and black letters, invisible to everyone but you, paint scars over his mouth that you would gladly wear instead. Death steals the light from his eyes and gifts him sleepless nights and raw knuckles. On the bad days he doesn't even want to get out of bed.

But he does.

You watch as Neil Perry walks on shards of glass to perform his daily tasks, watch him bruise a smile onto his face and bleed laughter from his tongue like what he told you wasn't true. Like Neil Perry doesn't think about death like a friend that will one day release him, like you don't know that he is cutting apart his insides to please his father.

And you can't stand it, so even if it feels like slashing apart your organs to be the shoulder he rests his head on, you do not hesitate to be there.

You let Neil Perry slice into your skin and find solace there. It doesn't matter if he will never love you back, just as long as he is okay.

Summer break drags on that year and everyday you think of Neil, think of his name carved into your flesh, his smile laughed into your cardiac tissue, his essence flowing in your veins alongside your blood. You hope and pray and wish that he will still be there, carefree and

joyful as ever, when you get back to Welton in September.

***

Neil Perry doesn't love you. That much you've always known.

But the way he stares at Todd Anderson tells you something you didn't know, and the blush on Todd's cheeks narrates a novel that you have not read before.

You wonder how strange the mechanisms of love are; how can a boy you've chased for so long, never look at you twice, but tumble head first for someone completely new? Is everything you are, not enough?

Is the way you've always sat with your chest pulled open, layers of muscle and skin ruptured to give way to your ribs, the bones pulled out so Neil could take your bleeding heart, not enough?

You know it is best to stop loving him.

(But you don't. You've always been too stubborn to do what is best for yourself, and as long as Neil is happy, a twisted part of you is okay with the needles pricking into your pores with every passing second).

***

Neil's dead.

He's dead and gone and six feet under the fucking ground and you can't *breathe*.

You don't even get invited to the funeral because Mr Perry blames you for it—you and the rest of the poets and Mr Keating too. He blames you for killing the love of your life. And that thought twists the knife even further because maybe you should have said something years ago.

Autumn '57 is when you met Neil Perry for the first time.

Winter '59 is when you lose him forever.

You think of the blood in Neil's mouth, the feeling of being trapped, the imprisonment of never being able to be yourself in your own home, in your own life. You think of the blood dripping from Neil's tongue, and you wish it was yours instead. You wish Neil had taken another bite out of your soul, that he said whatever he needed to say and gotten any support he could have used, that he drank you dry, because at least then Neil Perry would still be here—laughing, smiling, *living*.

You were always willing to suffer with unrequited feelings, so long as your best friend was happy, but why did he never understand that? Why did he never be the selfish boy you needed him to be?

Because now, he will eternally sleep in the soil with your heart in his cold clutch, after all, it has always been his to keep.

End Notes

CHARLIE AND NEIL ANGST IS MY FAVOURITE!!

but yes. i hope you enjoyed reading. <3

(scream abt dps with me on my twt starkspoet)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!